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"MY DOVE"
By JEAN BAPTISTE GREUZE

—Courtesy The Ehrlich Galleries

CHILD
OF THE
LABADYE
FAMILY



BY
VIGÉE
LE BRUN

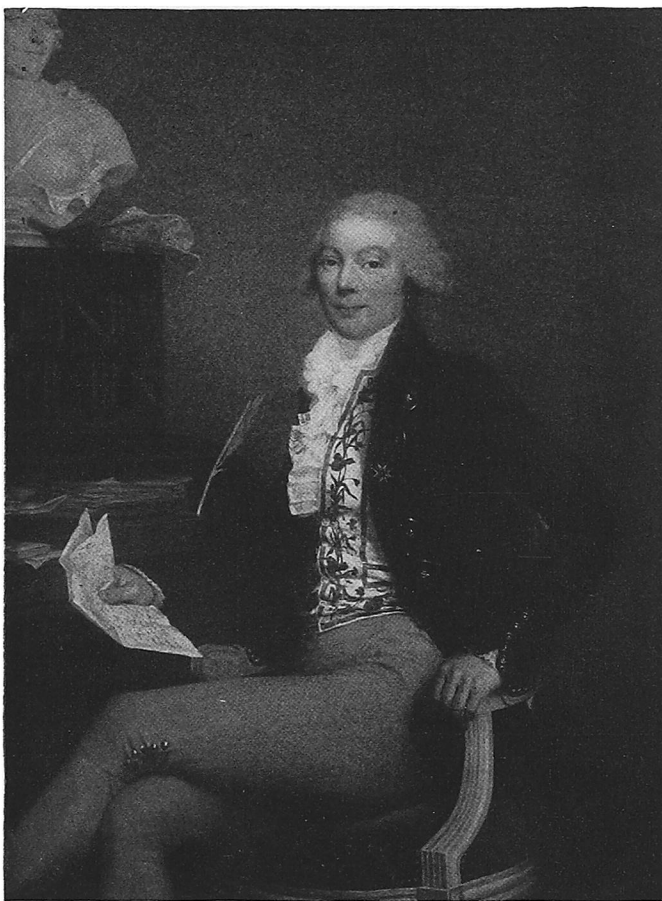
An Important Exhibition of Old Masters

By NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT

OLD masters, to which a gallery gives its exclusive attention, may mean anything not immediately new. A picture painted as far back as the eighteenth century will be found in the list of old masters, and with them will be found painters who delineated the features of Napoleon and his generals. With these can be classed that series of sensitive paintings by the men of Watteau and Fragonard types, excellent work, charged with merriment and vitality. We do not need to study over any of these paintings from the point of view of story, because the action is so simple the story becomes immediately evident. We do need, however, to enter into the spirit of

beauty or elegance, because it is for this that they were painted.

In New York there is now an exhibition of French Old Masters at one of the principal galleries, the most important artists of the period being represented. Perhaps the most fascinating picture of this exposition is the handsome "*Portrait of Marquis d'Acqueville*," by Aimée Duvivier, and dated 1791. This represents a handsome young man in beautiful flowered waistcoat, blue coat and grey breeches, sitting at a French library table; the whole picture is one of beautiful harmony and color, scrupulously finished and very full of life. There is also a charming head called "*My Dove*,"



PORTRAIT OF MARQUIS D'ACQUEVILLE

By AIMEE DUVIVIER

—Courtesy The Ehrich Galleries

by Jean Baptiste Greuze, beautifully engraved and widely circulated; a charming "*Portrait of Princess Galitzin*," wife of Dimitri III, by Louis Michel Van Loo; a sweet "*Child of the Labadye Family*," by Vigée LeBrun; a sturdy portrait of "*Antoine Coyzeux, Sculptor*," by Hyacinthe Rigaud, and a handsome "*Portrait*" of a man, by Nicholas Largillière. These are some of the more important portraits. In the exhibition will also be found the large example of Lancret, "*The Dance*;" "*The Head of an Apostle*," by Fragonard, which is an unusual picture painted by the artist shortly after his return from Italy; a charming "*Fete Champetre*," by Pater, and some examples of Louis Tocque, Jacques Louis

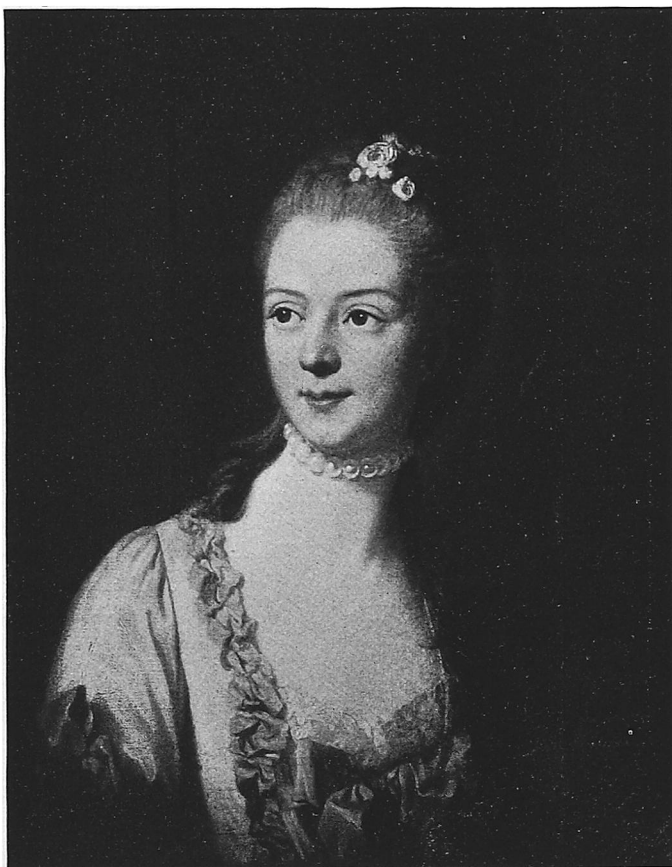
David, Boilly, Carle Van Loo, and Vestier.

There were two painters who occupied important places in this period, Hyacinthe Rigaud and Nicholas Largillière, who painted King Louis XIV and many members of the Royal Family and nobles and notables without end. Largillière was born in Paris in 1656. He has been called the French Van Dyck because his aim was to imitate the manner and beauty of the Flemish master. Of course he finished his work carefully, but his was a pretty bold brushing, though not as strong as that of his prototype. He worked for some years in London, and painted English noblemen including King James II, and with him his Queen. In 1786 he was elected an Academician of Paris. He surpassed all his French rivals excepting Rigaud. In his favor were facility and the ability to command good color. Besides the portraits of King Louis XIV there is that of Charles LeBrun, a picture thirty-six and an eighth inches by twenty-eight and three-fourths. Largillière has little history, but lived to attain an excellent success, dying in 1746. His chief competitor, Hyacinthe Rigaud, was probably more widely known in his day than any other French painter. Rigaud was born in 1659, painted in a great many different places, and among others in Spain, where he produced the portrait of King Philip V and, later, of the French king, Louis XIV, from whom he received the title of Court Painter.

There came some extraordinary pictures from his easel, and in the Louvre may be seen his over-life size portrait of Louis

XIV strutting about, in his royal robes. Now these robes were very wonderful. They were of velvet, or of some other very heavy material, wonderfully embroidered, and so stiff and rigid, that they seem to be very nearly able to stand alone. It was of one of these portraits of the king by Rigaud that Thackeray, the English novelist, said: "there was a picture there of Louis XIV, and he was first portrayed as robes without head or body. His heavy drapery had been drawn up at the side so as to show his wonderful legs and hose. Second was Louis, a short-legged, plump individual without legal robes. The third was the king dressed up in his magnificent garments complete, and that was Louis the King. Of course this caricature did not worry the French people any, but it did immensely amuse the English, who grew to have a contempt of Louis XIV with all his airs. This painting can be seen at the Louvre at any moment, and it certainly is well done, excepting for its excessive hardness and dryness. Rigaud died in 1743, which is a few years later than the birth of Greuze, and almost at the same moment that Vigée Le-Brun was born.

Then we have the widely known French painter, Jean Baptiste Greuze, who was a Burgundian, born in 1726. In Greuze's struggles to gain position he was remarkably successful, acquired a good deal of money and then managed to lose it all before he died. The story of Greuze is a very strange one. He had great ability, but like many another genius it took him some time to find out what he could do, and what the



PORTRAIT OF PRINCESS GALITZIN
By LOUIS MICHEL VAN LOO —Courtesy The Ehrich Galleries

public wanted him to do. He painted a good many large pictures with many figures, among others the one called "The Paternal Blessing," and again there were high-flown titles which pleased the public well enough, but brought him no considerable money. In fact the studied story in these pictures was pretty tiring, lacking that spontaneity which appeals to the people. Finally Greuze made a grand success by painting young girls of fourteen with the physical development of eighteen years of age. These pictures were incongruous, but they were very, very pretty, with soft and pulpy flesh and well rounded forms, mostly to the waist pictures. We illustrate one of these called "My Dove," and any other incident of such simple nature would



PORTRAIT
By NICHOLAS LARGILLIÈRE

—Courtesy The Ehrich Galleries

have furnished exactly as good a title, the real virtue in them being the painting of voluptuous forms with an exceedingly girlish head. The picture we illustrate gives an excellent idea of these girl heads and busts. There are now hanging in the Louvre two large pictures by Greuze in which an old man and his daughters are saying a tearful good-bye to the older son and brother, and the same matter turned about when the brother comes home again. The arrangement is dramatic, but it is more

bathos than pathos. The numerous heads are well done, but the attitudes and draperies are exceedingly stiff and awkward. In fact, it was the pretty young girls which the public called for. Greuze was a good father, but he and his daughters ended their lives in misery.

The period in which these painters lived was one of very many talented people. In war France produced at this time her best generals, her best engineers, her best statesmen and her best literary persons. But the



PORTRAIT OF ANTOINE COYZEVOX. SCULPTOR
By HYACINTHE RIGAUD

—Courtesy The Ehrich Galleries

golden period was declining when Vigée LeBrun came on the carpet and she was born in 1755. In 1776 she was married to her uncongenial husband, a painter and dealer in pictures. In the meantime the beautiful Queen, Marie Antoinette, had come to the throne and Madame LeBrun was a great favorite with her. She painted many portraits of Marie Antoinette as well as of scores of grondees. Our illustration is from her picture, "Child of the Labadye Family," and gives a very good idea of the

Madame's manner of painting the people that came in her way. In the course of events Lord Byron sat in front of her easel and Madame de Stael.

Vigée LeBrun had great influence with her sitters. Having tired of their ponderous head dresses the young painter induced them to pose in simple attire with hair and clothes unaffected by the artificialities of the modiste's. She gave us a beautiful assortment of pretty noble women in simple attire, but Her Majesty, Marie Antoinette,

would have none of this. She declared that she was a queen and that she should be portrayed in queenly dignity; clothing, hair and all. However, our lady painter and the queen were always the most intimate friends. In the course of time she left France, spent much time in Vienna, St. Petersburg, and other foreign capitals and

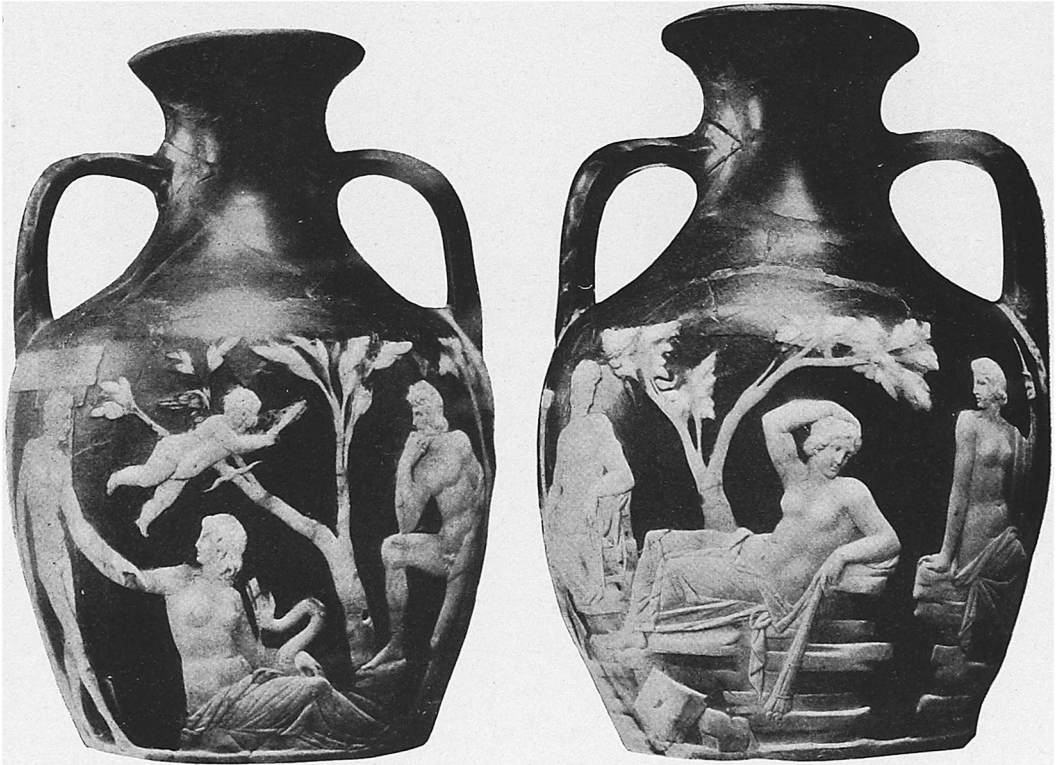
was received everywhere with open arms and warm greetings. She was witty enough to keep most of the money that she made, although her husband complained bitterly that he was neglected and she had to, in a measure, recognize his merit of rights. England knew her for a time, but she returned to the France that she loved.

The Portland Vase

By MARY W. HUDSON

A RARE piece of bric-a-brac in the British Museum is the Portland vase, named for the English family who bought and possessed it for a number of years. It was found sealed in a sarcophagus in a tomb at Monte del Grano, near Rome, about 1630. It was bought by

Sir William Hamilton in 1770, who owned it until 1787, when it was purchased by the Portland family, and later, in 1810, presented by them to the British museum. Because this treasure was first deposited in the Barberini Palace in Rome it is sometimes called the Barberini Vase, but it is



ILLUSTRATIONS SHOWING TWO SIDES OF THE PORTLAND VASE.